

Centre for Applied Social Sciences



**Proceedings of the
Regional Conference on Gender Issues in
Community-Based Natural Resource Management**

C B N R M

(Cresta Lodge, Harare : 24 – 27 August 1998)

Compiled by

Nontokozo Nabane

September 1998

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Voices From the Village:

Local Perspectives on the Empowerment of Women through CBNRM in Tsholotsho District, Zimbabwe

Julia Dube, Regina Maphosa, Gladys Mlotshwa¹⁹

Tsholotsho has 20 wards, 20 Councillors composed of one woman, one white man and 18 black men. The woman is the Councillor for Ward 7, which is the focus of the paper. The Ward has a population of 8 191 with 650 San Khois and the rest of them are Ndebeles. The San Khois are the minority ethnic group in Tsholotsho and are marginalised. There have been certain projects targeted at these people. When the Ndebele came to the District in 1953, the San Khois were already settled in area. These Ndebele people were moved from Matopo during the colonial era when the land that they occupied was gazetted for commercial farming purposes. These San Khois were hunters and gatherers, meaning that they relied on the forest for livelihood, whereas the Ndebele were pastoralists/ agriculturists.

There was a lot of vegetation in the areas that they lived in because they did not use trees. The problem that was encountered when the Ndebele moved to Tsholotsho is that it took time for the two groups to integrate because they were both afraid to meet each other and relate closely.

On natural resources, in the past, there were certain laws used traditionally which impacted on conservation e.g. the use of totems controlled the killing of animals. Trees were also protected and their use regulated through taboos, e.g. a tree called *ichithamuzi* (family destroyer) was not used for firewood. It was believed that if one uses the wood from this tree for firewood, their family would break up. Even for house construction purposes, people were urged to cut a few trees from one area and then move on to cut from another area. This protection also applied to domestic resources; e.g. kids were not allowed to eat eggs as they were said they would develop fits. During the harvesting times, there would be plentiful doves in the fields, but children were taught not to kill them as this would lead to them becoming extinct. Children were only told that it was taboo to eat doves and therefore enhanced their protection. Hunting was encouraged in winter where not many people would go out to hunt for fear of the cold. This was a measure of controlling the animals from being killed in large numbers.

However, when whites came, their conservation strategies were through arresting and went to the extent of gazetted national parks where people would be shot if they were seen hunting or poaching. Gazetting of these areas into parks increased poaching through the use of snares which killed a lot of animals at once instead of one thereby making the problem very serious. At independence, National Parks fences were cut and animals moved into homes destroying crops and even human lives. CAMPFIRE

¹⁹ (WARD 7 Tsholotsho)

was then introduced in 1989. At first, people did not understand what the programme meant by saying that resources belong to the people when they were actually arrested for the same resources. Zimbabwe Trust, through CAMPFIRE came in with training programmes that made the people realize how these resources were theirs.

The training also made the people understand that the income generated from these resources was actually for the people. The communities liked the idea as they thought of the dividends more than anything else.

The money was initially to be used for compensation for livestock and crops destroyed by the wild animals. Because of this, people then started cheating by killing their cattle and claiming losses to animals. In 1991, 5 people were compensated for the loss of their livestock. The money was received by the men. It was noted that households close to those compensated would actually brew beer knowing that their main customers would be those with some money. The money would therefore not benefit the entire family. Among those compensated, only one woman confirmed that she actually saw the money. The community then decided to stop compensating people as this did not go down well with everyone involved in the CAMPFIRE programme.

The programme has 2 levels of committees, the Village level and the Ward level. These committees are made up of women who hold key positions such as Secretaries, Treasurers, Chairpersons and Committee members. Although the men are also involved, this is one ward with women holding the main positions in the programme. Even visitors have been there to see how these women have done it and how they are performing.

The aim or objective of the Ward in CAMPFIRE has been to develop the ward and also create employment for the people. A number of projects have been done from the proceeds of the programme which are:

- 1991:** Compensation
- 1992:** Road construction to facilitate access
- 1993 to 1994:** Assisted the disabled, the sick, built a community hall, embarked on a goat rearing project to enable them to feed visitors as well as for income generation, school development and built a ground water tank at the community hall
- 1995:** Village maize distribution, put up a flag post, started a bakery project, erected a washing sink, funerals of the less privileged assisted with meeting expenses. However this was stopped as some money was being siphoned out of the program's coffers and a burial society was formed. Seeds for the community were purchased and distributed. There was also rehabilitation of the canal and people who were employed to do this were paid from the wildlife revenue. A general dealer was constructed and the official opening of this is in September this year, 1997.

These activities saw quite a lot of money being used and the allocation is as follows:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>AMOUNT ZS</u>
1991-1992	Compensation & Road construction	\$118 781.78
1993-1994	Community hall, Assistance to disabled & the sick, goats, school, development, hall and ground tank.	\$101 660.00
1995-1996	Village distribution	\$21 000.00
	Flag post, bakery, sink	\$ 850.00
	Funeral expenses to the less privileged	\$ 5 000.00
	Seed distribution	\$17 486.00
	Canal rehabilitation	\$ 4 620.00
	General dealer	\$136 915.00

Income from 1991-1996

1991	-	\$77 519.49
1992	-	\$96 895.65
1993	-	\$99 660.50
1994	-	\$42 934.02
1995	-	\$28 414.96
1996	-	\$68 229.49

TOTAL - **\$413 654.11**

It should be noted that there is more money being spent than being generated. This is so because the Community has other projects where money is earned and the other inputs are not purchased for cash, e.g. building materials are obtained from PG on credit. Other services are hired and these are not itemized. Most of the money is received from wildlife. For instance the community earns \$85 000.00 from the killing of one elephant. Concession fees are paid before an elephant is killed. 20% Administration fees are paid to the Council, 20% Management fees is deducted for CAMPFIRE salaries. Trophy fees are also less the administration and management fees. The amount due to the 4 Wards is 60%.

Purpose of Administration Fees

- To cover staff salaries in the administration of CAMPFIRE programme and this includes the CAMPFIRE Manager, Training Officer, Game Guards, Driver and Accounts Clerk.
- To cover travelling and subsistence allowances for all District CAMPFIRE members

drawn from all the 8 Wards when they attend District CAMPFIRE Committee meetings (DCCM)

- To cover purchases of office stationery for writing minutes, letters, hunting permits, etc.
- To cover repair and maintenance of CAMPFIRE vehicles, motor cycles and water engines.
- To cover purchase of arms and ammunition for use by Game Guards while doing PAC duties.
- To purchase uniforms of game guards and protective clothing for fence minders.

Purpose of Management Fees

- To cover CAMPFIRE projects such as borehole repairs and maintenance.
- To cover repairs and maintenance of the electric fence.
- To cover salaries for Problem Animal Reports, CAMPFIRE pump minders and CAMPFIRE fence minders.
- To cover purchase of tools for maintenance of the electric fence by fence minders.
- To deliver diesel to all CAMPFIRE grinding mills as and when requested to do so by respective Wards.
- To cover any other CAMPFIRE projects that might be identified from time to time.



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